



KÁTŁ'ODEECHE
FIRST NATION

COMMUNITY
WELLNESS
PLAN

2024-2029



INTRODUCTION

Kát'odeeche First Nation (KFN) has a membership of about 650 individuals, of which approximately 300 reside on the reserve. In the last 5 years the KFN community has experienced unprecedented climate and public health related events that have impacted the overall wellness of the community. KFN is a resilient community. For generations, KFN has thrived along the shores of the river. As stewards of their ancestral lands, KFN holds a sacred responsibility to preserve and protect the natural environment for future generations. In the face of historical underpinnings and contemporary pressures, KFN remains committed to preserving their cultural heritage and advancing the well-being of the community. With determination, this community wellness plan will help KFN navigate the complex challenges they face while staying grounded and rooted in a rich cultural legacy celebrating and embracing the interconnectedness that binds all KFN members as one family.





MISSION & VISION

Dene Nàhodhe - Nature & Spirituality

Elets'áts'edı- Help Each Other

Tsede Cha - Respect

Ełeqhŋıts'etq - Love Each Other



KFN will work together to build healthy lifestyles based on Dene values. The principles we abide by are respect, humility, sharing, caring, knowledge, support, commitment and love. KFN continuously strives to live in alignment with our strong connection to nature and Dene spirituality. To help each other as a community we will work together as we have always done collaboratively. We uphold our members and respect their voices by empowering them to share their knowledge and valuing their contributions. Respect also means honoring our Dene customs and ceremonies. The entire KFN community has a role to play in realizing community wellness by providing supports to help individuals realize their full potential. Wellness is about giving and receiving love. We need to unconditionally love one another and meet each other where we are at. We take pride in who we are and where we are from which is why we must work together as a community to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in activities and services and to provide feedback into the development and design of community wellness initiatives. This Community Wellness Plan will set the stage for the next five years and help point us in the direction we want to go together in. It is meant as a guide that can be revisited from time to time to ensure we are following the path of our Dene principles and incorporating wellness into all that we do in our day to day lives.



VALUES

KFN values a holistic approach that focuses on the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional aspects of wellness. By working together as a community with open communication and dialogue, we can build healthier lifestyles based on Dene values. We value our Elders, children, youth and families. We value sobriety, safety, security, justice and crime prevention that is based on cultural on the land activities. We value the ability to teach Dene spiritual values to our youth and families. We value effective and transparent, accountable governance where the community comes together to support one another through challenging times. We value programs and services that reflect and administer the needs of our community that foster pride, resilience, growth and building prosperity so that as a community we can build our resources and create successful, educated and culturally aware community members.





GOALS

Encourage Sobriety and Mental Well-being:

- Support individuals struggling with substance abuse disorders in their journey towards recovery
- Increase access to culturally appropriate mental health services and support networks
- Raise awareness about the impacts of substance abuse on individuals, families, and the community as a whole

Cultivate Cultural Strength and Resilience:

- Preserve and revitalize traditional cultural practices, languages, and knowledge systems
- Celebrate cultural diversity and promote intergenerational learning and sharing of cultural heritage
- Empower community members to reclaim their cultural identities and strengthen their sense of belonging

Develop a Vision for Needs Assessment:

- Address needs assessments such as affordability challenges within the community
- Explore wrap around needs assessment solutions and assist community members to navigate system supports
- Advocate for increased government funding and support for needs assessment tailored to Indigenous ways of knowing and being

Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change:

- Reduce the community's carbon footprint through energy efficiency measures and renewable energy projects
- Implement land stewardship practices that enhance resilience to climate-related hazards such as flooding, wildfires, and extreme weather events
- Foster community-led initiatives for climate change adaptation and mitigation, incorporating traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable land management practices



OBJECTIVES

Sobriety and Mental Well-being:

- Establish culturally relevant addiction treatment programs and support groups offered both on the land and in a clinical facility
- Offer daily mental health counseling services on reserve that integrates traditional healing practices and cultural ceremonies
- Develop programs and services that promote immediate, accessible healthy coping mechanisms such as harm reduction and after care plans

Cultural Strength and Resilience:

- Strengthen cultural revitalization programs focused on language preservation, arts, and storytelling
- Recruit and retain volunteers to organize cultural events, workshops, and ceremonies to strengthen community connections
- Establish mentorship programs to pass down traditional knowledge and skills to younger generations.

Needs Assessment:

- Conduct a community needs assessment to identify priority areas for intervention
- Explore partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector stakeholders to develop an individualized needs based approach for community members.
- Advocate for policy change at local, regional, and national levels to address systemic barriers to access adequate wellness services in order to ensure capacity to deliver programs and services

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:

- Develop a community climate action plan outlining specific goals and actions for developing and maintaining sustainable own source resources and enhancing resilience
- Invest in renewable energy infrastructure such as solar panels, wind turbines, and energy-efficient buildings, train and employee community members to operate



COMMUNITY BASED NEEDS

“Dene ways of being includes our ceremony, language, culture and customs.”

Roy Fabien

“The programs we need are ones where the community comes together.”

Doug Lamalise

“We need a place where a person that is suffering can turn.”

Dan ?

“We need someone we can go to to talk to.”

Elaine ?

“Spirituality is really really important to our well being.”

Nancy?

KFN can effectively meet its goals and objectives by first investing in its human resource capacity, ensuring training, recruitment and retainment of skilled community members capable of leading and implementing goals and objectives, initiatives and creating new and innovative strategies for community wellness. Community Wellness Fund needs to include job positions to prevent high turnover. Revise job descriptions to allow for flexible experience and education for hiring. Strong governance structures are essential to provide direction, accountability, and decision-making frameworks. The community should have the opportunity to hold decision makers to account and voice their concerns regularly in open community wellness meetings. Measuring and reporting on the effectiveness of programs and services including how many community members attend programs and services and how often community wellness programs and services have been cancelled is also a part of good and transparent governance. Community support builds collaboration and ensures that initiatives are embraced and sustained by residents. Prioritizing safety and security through robust measures and individuals' needs assessments ensures that vulnerable members are identified and supported. Climate mitigation and adaptation strategies should be integrated into community planning to address environmental challenges. Creating sustainable revenue streams enables self-sufficiency. Prioritizing addiction treatment services acknowledges and addresses social challenges. Lastly, garnering cultural strength and spirituality from Dene ways of knowing and being preserves identity and resilience, enriching the fabric of the community. By addressing these aspects comprehensively, a community can work towards holistic development and well-being. Allow for free use of community hall for community members.

Capacity and Evaluation

In order to build capacity for additional human resources and increase volunteerism for wellness programs and services to be successful on reserve KFN must take a comprehensive, collaborative and thorough assessment of the community's overall wrap around wellness needs. Engaging community members through ongoing surveys, focus groups, and interviews will help KFN leadership to understand wellness perspectives and preferences. Identifying key stakeholders such as community leaders, Elders, healthcare professionals, educators, and youth representatives and coordinating meetings or workshops with these key stakeholders and potential partners to discuss the importance of wellness programs and gather input such as program design and implementation will help to create collaborative working groups or committees to see the initiatives through from start to finish.

One way to determine gaps in delivery of programs and services is through resource mapping where inventory of existing resources within the community including human resources, facilities, funding sources, and potential partnerships are measured. Implementing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of wellness programs, including participant feedback from open discussion gatherings as an assessment tool can harness the evaluation findings to refine and improve program and services based on community needs and preferences that lean toward solutions focused alternatives tailored to the community's needs.

Developing a series of workshops focusing on important topics can be delivered through inviting experts from both within and outside the community to facilitate sessions and share knowledge and best practices and incorporating cultural activities such as traditional healing practices, storytelling, and land-based learning into program activities. Community outreach must be able to target all community members not just those who regularly attend and utilize the programs and services. Outreach must target those who need the programs and services most this can be done through multiple channels such as social media, community newsletters, posters, and word-of-mouth and door-to-door to reach different segments of the population

In terms of succession planning it important to identify strategies for long-term sustainability of wellness initiatives such as ensuring community ownership of intellectual property, and succession planning for program leadership roles. Assessing current talent within the community is done by evaluating the skills, experience, and potential of current employees and volunteers to identify individuals who could step into key roles in the future. This assessment may include performance reviews, competency assessments, and feedback from managers and colleagues. Providing incentive for training, mentoring, and development opportunities to help employees build the skills and experience needed to succeed in higher-level roles is paramount. This may involve head hunting individuals and providing them with the essentials they need to undergo formal training programs, job rotations, assignments, and coaching from senior leaders. Administration must create development plans that outline areas for growth, and actions needed for individuals to progress toward leadership roles. Regularly reviewing and update this community wellness plan and succession plans is important to ensure they remain aligned with organizational needs and priorities and the overall community wellness strategy.

Emergency Planning

Creating an emergency plan tailored to the needs of KFN requires careful consideration of our unique circumstances and values. By implementing an emergency plan, KFN can better prepare for and respond to further climate-related disasters while safeguarding our cultural practices and promoting community well-being. Since having to evacuate due to flooding and fires, KFN is currently in a recovery phase. As such it is important to recognize and acknowledge the severe impacts these climate events have had on the community as a whole and communicate with membership the possibility of recurrence of such events while working in partnership with government agencies and other potential partners to prepare and adapt in the face of ongoing climate related changes. In this recovery phase, KFN's priorities have shifted towards reactionary disaster response which has unfortunately taken away from the ability to focus on other important community priorities. KFN now requires the following:

1. a. Assessment and Assistance with:

- Conducting damage assessments to determine the impact of the emergency on community infrastructure, homes, and natural resources.
- Coordinating with government agencies, NGOs, and volunteers to provide assistance with cleanup, repairs, and recovery efforts.

2. b. Acute Psychosocial Support that:

- Offers counseling and support services to community members experiencing trauma or emotional distress as a result of the emergency.
- Incorporates cultural healing practices such as talking circles, ceremonies, or traditional healing methods into the recovery process.

3. c. Long-Term Planning to:

- Identify opportunities to mitigate future climate-related risks through measures such as floodplain management, wildfire prevention, infrastructure improvements and rebuilding.
- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge and land stewardship practices into community-based climate adaptation and resilience planning efforts.

Substance Abuse Treatment

We recognize the pressing need for effective and culturally sensitive approaches to address addiction issues that affect our community members. Substance abuse and related challenges not only impact individuals but also strain families and the broader community fabric. There is a severe drug problem in our community that we must address. In response to this critical need KFN would like to establish a comprehensive addictions treatment center on reserve to provide culturally appropriate and holistic services for community members struggling with substance abuse disorders. Providing accessible and community-centered addiction counseling services that addresses the unique needs and challenges of individuals and families within KFN to promote healing, resilience, and empowerment among individuals affected by addiction, integrating Dene healing practices with evidence-based interventions is necessary for the health of our community. Working towards a high functioning facility paired with an on-the-land component that serves the north can be accomplished but first KFN needs to start in small increments.

To establish an addictions Treatment Centre combined with On-the-Land Counselling Services, KFN must:

- Design, develop, the day to day operations of a culturally sensitive addictions treatment center on reserve.
- Work with partners to provide residential and outpatient treatment programs tailored to the needs of community members, incorporating Indigenous healing practices, counseling, group therapy, and medical support.
- Offer specialized services for youth, adults, and elders, recognizing the diverse needs and experiences of different age groups.
- Collaborate with local Elders, healers, and community leaders to integrate traditional knowledge and cultural practices into treatment programs.
- Ensure the provision of wrap-around services, including aftercare support, relapse prevention, family counseling, and vocational training opportunities.
- Deliver culturally sensitive addiction counseling services directly within the community, utilizing a mobile or on-land counseling approach.
- Conduct individual and group counseling sessions, workshops, and support groups focused on addiction recovery, coping skills, trauma healing, and cultural reconnection.
- Facilitate outreach activities to engage community members who may be hesitant to seek formal treatment, including those residing in remote areas or facing transportation barriers.
- Collaborate with local organizations, schools, and community centers to expand the reach of counseling services and build partnerships for holistic support.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Feeding the Fire Gatherings
Healing Circle Gatherings
Community Feasts
Community Hall Discussions
Immediate Addictions Services
Aftercare Addictions Services
Community Sober Dances
Hand Games
Men's Circles
Women's Circles
Youth Group
Elders Dinner's
Family Storytelling
Drumming Workshops
Guardian Workshops (Fishing & Hunting)
Family Camps - Swan Lake
Moose Hide Tanning
Canoe Races
Berry Picking
Fishing Derby's
Self Care Sessions
Safety Workshops
Community Gardening
Cooking Workshops
Sewing Circles



CONCLUSION

This Community Wellness Plan combines input that has been gathered overtime from community members, staff and Chief and Council. In concluding this community wellness project, we celebrate the collective effort and wisdom that has guided this ever evolving wellness plan towards a healthier and more vibrant future. Through collaboration and engagement, we have harnessed diverse voices, perspectives, and aspirations of our community to shape a comprehensive vision for wellness that reflects our shared values and priorities. KFN will continue to invite membership in decision-making and program delivery, particularly ensuring wisdom sought from Elders and innovative ideas from youth. Each voice has played a vital role in shaping the fabric of our collective well-being. This plan will help us to chart a course forward that encompasses the holistic dimensions of Dene wellness, addressing not only physical health but also mental, emotional, cultural, spiritual and environmental wellness. Our goals and objectives are attainable, grounded in the belief that by working together with purpose and intention, we can overcome any challenge and realize our shared vision for a thriving community. As we embark on the implementation phase of our wellness plan, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose and unity, knowing that our efforts will have a lasting impact on the health and vitality of our community members for generations to come. By nurturing a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and mutual support, we will continue to build upon the foundation laid by this project, investing in a community where every individual is valued, respected, and empowered to live their best life. We embrace the spirit of resilience and hope that defines our community, knowing that together, we possess the strength, creativity, and determination to overcome any obstacle and create a future filled with health, happiness, and prosperity for all.

